

**EdBlast! – ALL
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This issue's message from Jim

Classroom teachers selected as finalists in State Teacher of the Year program

Five outstanding classroom teachers were named this week as finalists in South Carolina's State Teacher of the Year Program. They were chosen from nominees representing 83 of the state's 85 local school districts and are vying to represent more than 50,000 South Carolina teachers in the National Teacher of the Year Program.

The finalists are Linda M. Dowling, a middle school language arts teacher at Sonovista Alternative School in Darlington County; Ann Marie Taylor, a special education teacher at Pine Tree Hill Elementary School in Kershaw County; Ilona Lawless Sunday, a science teacher at Crayton Middle School in Richland School District 1; Dawn Smith, a fourth-grade teacher at Bookman Road Elementary School in Richland School District 2; and Frances L. Hardy, a language arts teacher at Spartanburg High School in Spartanburg School District 7.

These exemplary teachers represent the best and brightest of South Carolinas's teaching force. I commend them on this great honor. If we are going to ensure a quality teaching force for the next generation, we must elevate the teaching profession and make sure that outstanding teacher-leaders like these are given the opportunity to help us find solutions to the challenges facing public education in our state.

To read more about the finalists and the Teacher of the Year Program, visit:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=743>

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1. School, district report card ratings revised after appeals

Seventeen schools and one school district have received revised ratings as a result of the State Department of Education's school report card appeal process. In addition, six schools met all of their federal Adequate Yearly Progress performance goals under No Child Left Behind. To read more, go to:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=745>

2. Ten organizations awarded grants to develop quality charter school programs

Ten organizations from across South Carolina have been awarded \$5,000 grants to assist in the development of a quality charter application. For more information go to:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=741>

3. Student Loan Corporation gives \$500,000 for financial education

The South Carolina Student Loan Corporation has awarded the South Carolina JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy a \$500,000 grant in a cooperative effort to improve personal financial management skills among youth in the state. The grant will enhance and improve financial literacy levels of the state's K-12 educators and students; promote and develop public awareness of the importance of financial literacy; and nurture personal financial literacy within the state through grassroots initiatives. For more information, visit:

<http://www.scjumpstart.org/>

4. April is Month of the Military Child

In support of America Supports You, Connect And Join and the American Legion Auxiliary have joined forces to announce "The Month of the Military Child," an arts and crafts and scrapbooking extravaganza to take place during April. The observance provides retailers with the mechanism for holding crafting and scrapbooking events for military children and their families and friends. For additional information, visit:

www.monthofthemilitarychild.com

<https://www.connectandjoin.com/cajhtml/>

<http://www.americasupportsyoudil/americanasupportsyoudil/index.aspx>

5. Taxpayers can contribute to educational entities through tax returns

The South Carolina Financial Literacy Trust Fund is the newest of several entities state taxpayers can contribute to through their income tax returns (Line 13 of 1040A or Line 27 of SC1040). Financial literacy teaches students about personal finance and investments. Contributions can also be made to the K-12 Public Education Fund and First Steps. For more information, contact Marc Drews (mdrews@ed.sc.gov) at 803-734-5836 or visit:

www.sctax.org

6. Garrett is March calendar highlight

Lydia Garrett is one of South Carolina's nationally acclaimed entertainers. Born in Columbia, she graduated from C.A. Johnson High School in Richland School District One and Johnson C. Smith University. Garrett is this month's feature in the BellSouth African American History calendar. To read more about her visit go to:

<http://www.scafricanamericanhistory.com/currenthonoree.asp?month=3&year=2007>

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

7. Department to offer grant writing workshops

The State Department of Education Grants Office will offer two additional workshops in its grant writing series. The dates are May 2-4 and September 12-14. Department of Education employees, educators, non-profits staff, and personnel from other state agencies are eligible to attend. For more information, visit:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/grants/2007GrantWritingWorkshopSeries.html>

8. Dropout prevention workshops scheduled

Principals at all levels should plan to attend a workshop on how to reduce the dropout rate. Dr. Jay Smink, Dr. Sam Drew, and Dr. Terry Cash from the National Dropout Prevention Center will share strategies, and schools and districts will present information on initiatives that work. Sessions will be held on April 17 in Clemson and April 19 in Columbia. Registration is \$50 and includes instruction, handouts, lunch and the publications. For more information, contact Bruce Moseley (BMoseley@Leaders.ed.sc.gov) at 803-734-8429.

9. Poetry conference to take place in Columbia

The University of South Carolina's Arts Institute, the South Carolina Poetry Initiative, and the South Carolina Arts Commission, will present poet Sonya Sones at its "POETRY POPS: Conference for Teachers and Students" on March 10 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.. Free and open to teachers, students, and the public, the conference will be held at the Columbia Museum of Art. Recertification renewal credit is available for teachers. For more information, e-mail lpierce@columbiamuseum.org or visit:

<http://www.colmusart.org/html/s07school.shtml>

10. Center for Ocean Sciences sponsoring workshop

Middle and high school educators can explore the physical forces which create barrier island dynamics common to the Carolinas and Georgia this summer. The 2007 Professional Development Summer Program will be held June 25-29 in Manteo, North Carolina. Sponsored by the Center for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence, the program has several benefits: stipend, continuing education credit, lodging, travel and meals. For more information, contact Elizabeth Joyner (elizabeth.rogers@scseagrant.org) or visit:

<http://www.scseagrant.org/se-cosee/>

11. Palmetto State Teachers holding annual convention

"Reaching At-Risk Students in a Violent World" will be the topic when Jim Littlejohn presents at the Palmetto State Teachers Association's annual convention March 10 at the Lexington Municipal Conference Center in Lexington. State Superintendent Jim Rex and State Teacher of the Year Buffy Murphy will also speak. The meeting features breakout sessions on gangs, conflict management, bullying, and differentiated instruction. The cost is \$20 for students, \$40 for PSTA members and \$60 for nonmembers; breakfast and lunch are included. The registration deadline is March 7. For more information, call 803-256-2065 or visit:

www.palmettoteachers.org

12. American Star program accepting nominations

The U.S. Department of Education is currently accepting nominations for its 2007 American Stars of Teaching awards, which recognize teachers who are improving student achievement – using innovative strategies – and making a difference in the lives of their students. Anyone can nominate an American Star. One teacher will be recognized from each state and the District of Columbia. The deadline for nominations is April 1. For information, visit:

<https://www.t2tweb.us/AmStar/About.asp>

13. Underage drinking is focus of conference

The South Carolina Association of Prevention Professionals and Advocates and the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center will hold their “Changing the Culture of Underage Drinking” conference on March 21-23 at North Trenholm Baptist Church in Columbia. The fee is \$75/person or \$250/team of four. Students can register for \$25. The contact is Elizabeth G. Peters at 803-791-3740.

14. Graduate Economics course announced

A three week course for K-5 teachers will give participants a knowledge of basic economic and financial literacy concepts, an understanding of how to address the standards for economics and financial literacy, and exposure to financial literacy curriculum materials. The course will held June 11-29 at Winthrop University. There is a fee which includes textbooks. For information, contact Dr. Stone at stoneg@winthrop.edu, or Donna Windham at the South Carolina Council on Economic Education at 803-777-2938, or visit:

www.sceconomics.org

15. South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo 2007 set

The South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo 2007 will be held March 29 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. This event will include exhibits and workshops about the latest assistive technology for people with disabilities and age-related limitations. It is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Mary Alice Bechtler (maryab@cdd.sc.edu) or Janet Jendron (jjendron@usit.net) or visit:

<http://www.sc.edu/scatp/atexpo07.html>

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

16. Georgetown University's center accepting applications for fellowships

Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Education and Development is accepting applications for its English Language (EL) Fellow Program Academic Year 2007-08 Fellowships. This program promotes English language learning around the world and fosters understanding between the people of the United States and people of other countries. Assignments are from September – June. The fellowship includes a \$25,000 stipend, living allowance (housing, food, utilities, local transportation, international round-trip transportation, insurance, and miscellaneous expenditures. For more information contact elf@georgetown.edu or telephone, 202-687-2068. To apply online, visit:

<http://elf.georgetown.edu/apply>

17. Object of History is teacher resource

Each month The Object of History features an artifact from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History's collections related to a major topic in U.S. history. The site includes curriculum materials and opportunities for students to participate in live online forums with Smithsonian curators and historians. Teacher materials include lesson plans and other resources to support instruction. For more information, e-mail teachers@objectofhistory.org or visit:

<http://objectofhistory.org/>

AWARD PROGRAMS

18. Schools can apply for National School Change awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the Eighth Annual National School Change Awards, conducted by the American Association of School Administrators and the Fordham University Graduate School of Education. Applicants measure themselves against sixteen criteria, and winners receive a \$5,000 grant. Schools can nominate themselves. Materials must be received by March 19. For more information, go to:

<http://www.npli.org/nsca/>

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

19. Governor's School for Science and Mathematics accepting applications

Rising eighth-, ninth- and tenth-grade students are invited to spend their summer studying math, science and technology at the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics. The summer program introduces participants to scientific principles, demonstrates applications to the real world, and acquaints students with career opportunities. Call 843-383-3958 for specifics on classes, tuition and scholarships, or visit:

www.scgssm.org/sfp

20. State Fair to offer scholarships

The South Carolina State Fair will offer fifty \$2,000 scholarships to 2007 graduating seniors in both public and private high schools and home schools in South Carolina. The application period runs through March 21. For more information, contact Lauren Funderburk (laurenf@scstatefair.org) or telephone 803-799-3387, ext. 15. For details and the application, click in the Right Now box located on the right side of

<http://www.scstatefair.org>

21. Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities offers several programs

The Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities offers several programs in creative writing, drama, music, and visual arts. Offerings range from intensive two-week programs for rising ninth graders and tenth graders to a summer dance program and teacher institutes. For more information, e-mail admissions@scgsah.state.sc.us or visit:

<http://www.scgsah.state.sc.us/index.php>

This issue’s quotation

“Here in South Carolina, we have a good foundation on which to build – some solid advances in recent years – but we need to do more, and it must happen quickly. Incremental improvements are not enough to take us where we need to be in the 21st century.” ~ Dr. Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education

EdBlast! welcomes submissions

Do you need help in publicizing an education news item that would be of interest to a statewide audience? Send your information to jfairnot@ed.sc.gov or call Janice Larrymore Fairnot, EdBlast! editor, at 803-734-8999.

Spread the word about EdBlast!

We need your help in spreading the word about EdBlast!, the State Department of Education's e-newsletter. Here's the sign-up link:

<http://ed.sc.gov/tools/edblast/>

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